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Learning Life Lessons through Art



Trafficking in persons is a serious problem in South Quito, Ecuador. With many people living in poverty, children are especially at risk. Often they are sent to live with friends or extended family because their parents must emigrate to find jobs. In November 2005, six men were arrested in the area for prostituting minors.

Photo: Amigos por la Vida/Ana Pumaipalpa

That is why educating youth about the issue and how to protect themselves from falling victim to traffickers is vital. In six local schools, USAID sponsored a program for students ages 5-12 who are at high risk of becoming victims.

3,000 Ecuadorian children learned about human trafficking and participated in a USAID-sponsored art contest on the topic, helping them make sense of the harsh reality of what they had just learned. These three boys are preparing their submissions at a school in North Quito, Ecuador.

The program taught students about the dangers of human trafficking and culminated in an art contest where students were invited to draw pictures either depicting trafficking or a perfect world without trafficking. Six children with the best drawings were awarded bicycles, rollerblades, and skateboards. Finalists received t-shirts bearing an anti-trafficking message. USAID's program also presented plaques recognizing the efforts of the six participating schools, serving as a reminder to students of the importance of staying vigilant and safe.

Telling Our Story
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